

*Mrs. Grignon From the Author*

Stratheden, W.F.C., 2nd Baron.

= WILL MR. LABOUCHERE'S

NAVIGATION MEASURE PASS THE HOUSE

OF LORDS?

IN A

LETTER

TO A

PROTECTIONIST PEER,

BY

THE HON. W. F. CAMPBELL,

M.P. FOR THE TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE.

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LONDON:

FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE;

& MACMILLAN & CO. CAMBRIDGE.

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1849.

Nov. 28, 1967

Press  
Room

L O N D O N :  
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,  
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

✓  
LOXWELL  
20437

## ERRATA.

Page 5, line 17, *for* 50,209 *read* 5,209

— 17, — 3, *for* sane and patriotic *read* wise and conscientious

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## LETTER,

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MY DEAR LORD,

ON Sunday afternoon your Lordship had the goodness to call upon me, with a view to the debate on Mr. Labouchere's measure, which takes place in your House on the 7th of May; \* \* \*

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\* \* \* Unfortunately, I was little able to meet the wishes of your Lordship. Having failed entirely in the hope of being able to support the measure in the debate upon the third reading, as your Lordship well knows I had intended, in consequence of somewhat painful circumstances which I need not now explain, since that time other thoughts have so far occupied me as very much to weaken the impression of the numerous and complicated facts

which are necessary to be brought to bear on this widely ramifying question. Since the visit of your Lordship, I have felt myself bound to recur to some of the materials which I still have around me; and I will now endeavour, with that indifference to style and disregard of regularity which the shortness of the time imperatively calls for, to collect a few statements in the order of the questions which your Lordship put to me, and not in that of any formal argument which it might have been appropriate to urge upon the House of Commons.

There is one mooted topic of enquiry which the candour of your Lordship in the outset of our conversation rendered it unnecessary that I should any longer dwell upon. It is, whether the British ship-owner is able to compete with the foreign ship-owner in the construction of merchant vessels? The affirmative of this question your Lordship did not scruple to admit. You declared that you had no desire to countenance the ill-supported paradox: that while the English compete successfully with the Dutch; while nearly all the trade between Harlingen and London is carried on in British bottoms; while, in point of fact, we command the trade between Holland and England; while there is no country in the world which can compete with our North American ship-builders<sup>1</sup>; while in China,

<sup>1</sup> See Evidence of Mr. Browning, Mr. Graham, Mr. Berger, and Mr. Colquhoun.

Singapore, and Manilla, English vessels are found to have the advantage over the United States; while the amount of British and colonial shipping entered inwards, in the United States, increased between 1836 and 1846, from 227 ships, measuring 82,453 tons, to 368 ships, measuring 223,676 tons, being an increase of 171 per cent; while the United States shipping only increased in that time from 542 ships, measuring 236,393 tons, to 741 ships, measuring 444,442 tons, being only an increase of 90 per cent; while the United States, admitting goods imported by the vessels of Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, irrespective of their being the productions of those countries, the total number of the ships of those countries arriving in the United States in 1846 was 21 Russian, 84 Swedish, 19 Danish, 50,209 English ships; while a competent authority has undertaken to import Dantzic oak, and build a ship at Sunderland, cheaper than it could be built at Dantzic; while the ship-owners in Bremen, without any natural advantages, and without any Navigation Law, by means of intelligence and industry, compete with the whole world; while, also, in its facility for building iron vessels, England is without any rival; that, in spite of these substantial facts, any danger can arise to the employment of our tonnage from the competition of the foreigner.

Indeed, my Lord, in this admission, you have only followed the implied convictions of your party. In the debate upon the third reading, in the Commons,

Mr. Herries made scarcely an attempt to revive the hazardous position which was once so much relied upon. Mr. Disraeli would not have ventured on the desperate expedient of treating with contempt and ridicule the grounds which have been alleged in favour of the measure, if the more plausible and decorous scheme of establishing a counter-case had not been utterly impracticable. Still less would Mr. Walpole, whose parliamentary abilities your Lordship recollects, have incorporated in his graceful speech the crowning answer to the apprehensions of the ship-owner; viz., that the relaxations introduced by Mr. Huskisson have led to unmixed good, if he had thought it possible to hold with that declamatory class that they have led to unmitigated ruin, which is an essential portion of the creed they urge against the present measure. Dismissing altogether, therefore, this preliminary portion of the subject, I will now proceed, as shortly as I can, to answer the remaining questions upon which your Lordship has declared that you are still unsatisfied.

You inquired, in the first instance, "Whether in point of fact any solid reasons have appeared to justify the interference of the Legislature? whether any difficulty would arise in acquiescing in the law as it exists at present? whether the movement which has taken place against it is gratuitous and rash, or sober and authenticated?" My Lord, if I am not mistaken, in your view, the Executive is more important in the long run than the legislative part

of our system. The public good, in your mode of thinking, is more effectually secured by a prosperous administration of the departments which divide the public service, than by any large and showy alterations introduced, to satisfy a popular demand, or imaginary grievance, in the statute book. Hence it is you are disposed to feel a certain scepticism when a bold or comprehensive measure is submitted to you for approval, as to whether it is not rather ornamental than substantial in its nature; whether it is not better calculated to give effect to an ambitious theory, than to remove obstructions from the path of regular and ordinary statesmanship. If ever you could be induced to look with favour on a measure which exhibits force in its design, and breadth in its dimensions, it would be when the daily exigencies of the administrative service had suggested it, when it was necessary to the credit and efficiency of some great department in the State, irrespectively of those who may happen at the moment to preside over it. Having since last session taken pains to acquire as correct a view as I was able of the measure which Mr. Labouchere has carried through the House of Commons—I mean, as regards the circumstances out of which it may be supposed to spring, and the object towards which it is directed—the only definition I could now consent to give of it is, a considerable change forced upon the minds of those who are responsible for the daily operation of the State machinery by the accumulated



exigencies of the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the Board of Trade. All the facts which bear upon the measure in demonstration of its necessity, may be classed in connexion with one of these three great departments. It would not be inaccurate, I think, to state that they may be considered as uniting, without any reference to persons, in an importunate demand upon the Legislature for some such measure as the House of Commons has now, after a long deliberation, read a third time.

The difficulties which the Foreign Office is entitled to allege as against the present Navigation Laws, are too complicated to be fully entered into in such a letter as the present. Ample justice will no doubt be done to them in debate. It will be sufficient that I should just apprise your Lordship of their nature. They depend upon two great facts. 1st. By a treaty dated 1838, relaxations were conceded to the Austrian Government, on the ground of some peculiar circumstances affecting their trade and shipping, which have brought down upon the Office nearly every European power which has any shipping to encourage, in the attitude of powerful demand for those advantages which Austria has extorted. In the second place, the objections which are made by foreign powers to all the main provisions of our navigation system, designed as they were to arrest and abridge their maritime advantages, have gradually prepared their minds for such a general conspiracy against British interests, as would have the

demonstrable consequence of driving 200,000 tons of British shipping from employment<sup>1</sup>. And although the evidence of Captain Stirling and Lieutenant Brown has gone a great way to show that we are not entirely dependent on the size of our mercantile marine for the support of our navy, it cannot be denied, my Lord, that so grave a blow as this may justly cause misgiving and alarm in the minds of those who are responsible for the maintenance of British independence among the powers of the globe.

The case which the Colonial Office is competent to urge against the present Navigation Laws, is at once concise and irresistible. The colonies are now exposed to foreign competition. The sentence which exposes them to foreign competition is well known to be irrevocable, inasmuch as it is in conformity with the convictions of the English Legislature, with the wishes of the English people, and the fixed laws of economic progress. In sustaining this competition, the colonies have various advantages, and some disadvantages, inherent to their position. However much the former may preponderate, it is by no means clear (and how much better is your Lordship informed of this than I am) that, if restricted in their means of export and of import, they will be able to maintain their position as commercial countries. The Colonial Office is beset with remonstrances from Canada, Jamaica, Trinidad, against the hardship and injus-

<sup>1</sup> See History of Navigation Laws, by a Barrister.

tice of being compelled to pay higher freights for the supposed advantage of the British ship-owner; when the loss of the protective system, which for many ages they enjoyed, has made it so peculiarly important for them to diminish, in all its elements, the cost of production in the articles in which they deal. No doubt, my Lord, the colonies would be disposed to submit to this grievance, if it could be considered as essential to the foreign policy or domestic policy of England. That it is not essential to the former, I have given reasons for supposing; that it is not conducive to the latter, will appear when we investigate the case which the Board of Trade may be considered to advance against the present Navigation Laws.

My Lord, that case is not composed, as some have unscrupulously said, of isolated facts and peddling exceptions. The complaints of the British merchant fall into four great divisions. He complains, first, that he is deprived of much valuable trade which, with an unrestricted navigation, would be open to him; he complains, in the second place, that the present system places a premium upon foreign manufactures; he complains, in the third instance, of the commercial prohibitions which other countries have imposed, with a view to self-defence against the system which is now at issue; he complains, in the fourth place, that great difficulties are opposed to those new enterprises which, as capital becomes more redundant, and the rate of profits more depressed, are more essential to his prosperity.

I will only refer your Lordship to the evidence of Mr. Brooks for an explanation of the process by which, according to the present navigation system, the sugar trade between England and Batavia is annihilated; to that of Mr. Goschen, for a statement of the manner in which England is now prevented from being a *dépôt* for foreign goods; and to that of Mr. Berger, for an illustration of the sentiments impressed upon the minds of British merchants by what he justly terms this oppressive tax upon the commerce of the world.

My Lord, the task of showing, by a copious reference to correspondence and details, to what extent the three departments I have mentioned are justified in the position they assume before the Legislature, is not so much for me as others to accomplish. I have said enough, perhaps, to show that each of them has a case which cannot be rejected; that each of them has an interest in the settlement of this question; and that it has been unsettled by gradually advancing circumstances over which governments and parties could not in their nature exercise control. I come therefore to the second question which your Lordship put to me, namely, "Into what shape has Mr. Labouchere proposed to throw the legislative burden which the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the Board of Trade, are all three compelled to force upon his shoulders?"

The main features of the Bill itself are, first, that it removes all restrictions which the existing law

imposes upon the employment of foreign ships in the foreign and colonial trade ; secondly, that it admits foreign-built ships to be registered as British ; thirdly, that it repeals the obligation to carry apprentices ; fourthly, that it reserves ample power to the Crown of exercising retaliation upon the ships of such states as may not treat us upon a footing of equality. You will see, therefore, that it involves three great and fundamental principles : first, that our foreign, colonial, and commercial interests should be extricated from the difficulties in which they have been all involved ; secondly, that the British ship-owner should no longer be exposed to the embarrassing conditions under which his business has been hitherto conducted ; and, lastly, that in case foreign powers should without any provocation continue the designs they now justify against British shipping, sufficient means should be provided to repel and to defeat them.

Your Lordship next asked me : “ Would it not be possible to frame the measure with a regard to reciprocity even more strict than that involved in the present measure ? ” Decided as my own convictions are in the negative of this question, I fear that I may have some difficulty in explaining them. The debate in the Committee of the House of Commons on the Bill is perhaps the best answer to your question. Mr. Bouverie proposed a plan of reciprocity which was found to be obnoxious to two classes of objections. It would either have in-

volved a flagrant inequality in the restrictions we endured, and the restrictions we inflicted, or have made it necessary to vary our Navigation Law to suit the exact case of every country in the world. Mr. Gladstone indicated a scheme which was not subjected to the ordeal of parliamentary discussion, and which, although doubtless it was fraught with the elements of ingenuity and order, it is questioned by candid judges whether even his mind could have digested into any clear or practicable system. The fact is, my Lord, that any scheme of rigid reciprocity is met by the difficulty, that if concessions were made conditionally to some countries, we should be compelled to make them unconditionally to other countries. To make the extent of this difficulty visible, it is necessary to allude to our relations to some of those countries with which we have treaties containing favoured nation clauses. With Sweden we have some treaties of ancient, and one of modern date, which contain stipulations binding either country to treat the other on the footing of the most favoured nation<sup>1</sup>. It has been held that, were we to admit the ships of any country into the reserved trades, though upon condition that British ships should be admitted into the corresponding trade of that country, we should be bound to admit Swedish ships into the same trades without obtaining the fulfilment of a similar condition. With Spain and Denmark also there are treaties of ancient date, which are still in force, and which it is not in our

<sup>1</sup> See Hazlitt's Treaties.

power to terminate. They contain stipulations couched in language quite as strong as that of our Swedish treaty, binding us to treat those nations on the footing of the most favoured nation. Denmark treats foreign ships with liberality, and our engagements to her would therefore not be likely to lead to much embarrassment. Spain, on the other hand, imposes very heavy differential duties upon foreign ships, and there is no probability of her taking them off. Here then a difficulty would at once arise ; for Spain would claim our privileges without fulfilling our conditions<sup>1</sup>. We have treaties with Buenos Ayres, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Columbia, which are not in our power to terminate, and which contain some stipulations in the nature of most favoured nation clauses. To these, however, less importance is attached. In the treaty with France, it is mutually agreed that, in the intercourse of navigation between the two countries, the vessels of a third power shall in no case obtain more favourable conditions than those stipulated in favour of British and French vessels. This provision, so far as it extends, it will be observed, is unconditional. According to the construction put upon the Swedish treaty, we shall be bound, if we grant any better privileges to the vessels of the United States, in regard to the navigation between England and France than those secured to French vessels, to extend the same to French vessels, without regard to any possible equivalent from the United States. With Holland a treaty was concluded in 1824,

<sup>1</sup> See Hazlitt's Treaties.

having reference to the East Indian possessions of either country; which treaty is not terminable at the will of one party, and under which we shall be obliged to admit the ships of Holland to trade freely with the possessions on the continent of India and on Ceylon in the Eastern seas, although they absolutely exclude us, in common with other foreigners, from trading with the Spice Islands, and with some of their settlements in Borneo; and although they have the power of absolutely excluding us, with other foreigners, from any other of their possessions<sup>1</sup>. This case alone demonstrates the impossibility of adopting a rigidly self-acting rule of retaliation, without making provision for the fulfilment of our treaty obligations. In the treaty of 1835 with the Hanse towns, there is a stipulation that all goods, wares, and merchandise, whether the production of the Hanse towns, or of any other country, which can legally be imported in British ships, shall also be admitted in Hanseatic ships. If, therefore, we repeal the prohibition against importing the produce of Asia, Africa, and America, from Europe, and allow it to come in British ships, we must admit it from the Hanse towns in Hanseatic ships, without regard to an equivalent; and even if it were not admitted in the ships of any other

<sup>1</sup> See Hazlitt's Treaties. This information has been furnished to the writer by the singularly able author of "A History of the Navigation Laws," and may be relied upon as perfectly authentic.



foreign country. For the rest, it is sufficient to remark, that any privileges which we may be obliged to grant unconditionally or gratuitously to any country, must be granted unconditionally to Austria, Prussia, Portugal, to Uruguay, Hanover, and Sicily; besides Holland, Sweden, Denmark.

One more remark is called for. It may be said, Why not adopt a self-acting rule, with a special proviso to meet our treaty obligations? This might undoubtedly be done; but it would have the effect of calling the attention of foreign countries to the existence of such obligations on our part, and of inducing them to set up claims founded upon those treaties. The Bill as arranged by Mr. Labouchere does all that is needed: it empowers the Crown to retaliate; it defines the limits of retaliation; and, finally, by virtue of the provision which regulates the period of its coming into operation, gives time for the Queen to make arrangements in the interim with foreign powers. Such a course is not only reasonable, but quite in accordance with the precedents set by Mr. Huskisson in 1822 and 1825. Some indeed have objected to the discretionary power vested in the Crown; but it is only to be borne in mind, my Lord, that since a self-acting system is impossible, whether you proceed by relaxations or resumptions, a discretionary power in the Crown is equally essential.

Such, my Lord, may be considered as an outline of the measure against which Lord Stanley has pro-

posed to agitate the country, and has threatened with a warm uncompromising opposition, in the House of Lords. On what ground a <sup>wise & com-</sup> ~~sane or pa-~~ <sup>scientific</sup> ~~man~~ statesman can meet it in such a spirit, the human mind is utterly bewildered in any effort to discover. It would ill become his dignity and prudence to resort to the effete hypothesis, abandoned in the House of Commons, that the British ship-owner is not able to sustain the foreign competition over which he has long triumphed. Still less could he decorously deny that the Foreign Office is entitled to attention, when it alleges that to maintain our mutilated and incongruous restrictions against the demand of foreign powers is impossible, and that nothing but a speedy and effectual change can dissipate the rapidly-converging elements of a retaliatory system by which 200,000 tons of British shipping may be driven from employment. It would not consist with his humanity or patriotism to deny that our colonies ought to have every possible advantage, to indemnify them for the privileges which he may think should never have been taken from them. He will not deny that the allegiance of Canada is placed in jeopardy by the restrictions on its navigation; nor will he say that it is proper to endanger our colonial empire at a time when a redundant population, and a redundant capital, make it more than ever necessary to us; when the rapid and neglected start which some forms of social evil have taken in the mother country, accord-

ing to the views of many, render it the only field for the conceptions of the statesman, the only refuge for the aspirations of the philanthropist; when the public mind is just beginning to awaken to a correct idea of its importance, and when its own maturity is not such as to make it certain whether an abrupt dismemberment of its vast and scattered portions would contribute to the despotism and confusion, or to the liberty and order, of the world.

Will Lord Stanley deny, either that the system which is demonstrably calculated to sustain and aggravate commercial distress, is also demonstrably calculated to promote that union of our middle classes and our demagogues which, in the eyes of M. Léon Faucher<sup>1</sup>, can alone effect the subjugation of the British empire to the disastrous and humiliating sway of a numerical majority? Will Lord Stanley undertake to say, that in a measure to repeal the Navigation Laws (a measure so urgently required by interests of such a pregnant character), no provision should be made to secure reciprocal concessions from our neighbours? or will he enter on the hopeless undertaking of superseding the provisions which Mr. Lahouche has made, and undertake a task which the industry and ability of Mr. Bouverie have conspicuously and wholly failed to execute, which Mr. Herries has declined and Mr. Gladstone has abandoned?

<sup>1</sup> See *Études sur l'Angleterre*, par M. Léon Faucher. 2 vols. 8vo. 1845.

So neither can it be expected that Lord Stanley should resort to the gross and childish fallacy that, because the Navigation Laws may have been successful in accomplishing their object, they ought to be preserved without any object to excuse them. As it is possible that less fastidious speakers may resort to it, it will not be inappropriate to arm your Lordship with an extract from the luminous oration which Mr. Huskisson delivered in the House of Commons on May 12th, 1826: "Under what circumstances did England found her Navigation system? When her commercial marine was comparatively insignificant, her wealth inconsiderable; before manufactures were established, and when she exported corn, wool, and other raw material. When, on the other hand, Holland and the Netherlands were rich; possessed of large manufactures, and of the largest portion of the carrying trade of Europe and the world. What has followed? The commercial marine of other countries has dwindled away, and that of Great Britain is now immense. \* \* \* Let gentlemen reflect on these circumstances before they decide that it is necessarily wise to enter on a similar contest with other poor and unmanufacturing countries. Let them seriously consider whether a system of discriminating duties (and the same would apply, of course, to direct prohibitions), now that the exclusive patent by which we held that system is expired, is not the expedient of such a country as I have described, rather than the resource of one which already

possesses the largest commercial marine in the world. They will then see that it may possibly be a wise policy to divert such countries from that system, rather than to goad them on, or even leave them a pretext for going into it<sup>1</sup>."

This extract from the earliest of Lord Brougham's many efforts, and one which is still valued by the student of colonial literature for its elegance, its erudition, and precision, may be usefully considered. "The Navigation Laws of England operated upon the distribution of wealth and industry already in the country, or upon the direction of resources and capacities which the nation possessed. Perhaps it only anticipated by a short period that state of things which the course of national prosperity might have afterwards established of its own accord<sup>2</sup>."

If, therefore, we inquire on what principle an uncompromising opposition could be offered to the Bill, it appears that only one could be adopted as a basis to it. It is the principle that change is always to be deprecated, however pregnant with improvement:—that evil is a good if it exists, and good an evil if it has not been invested with existence: that chaos ought to have survived, although creation has succeeded to it: the principle by which tyranny was recommended in the days of Charles the Second—by which the Revolution was condemned—the

<sup>1</sup> Huskisson's Speeches, Vol. III. p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Brougham on the Colonial Policy of Modern Europe, vol. i. p. 267.

Slave Trade justified—the demonstrations of the Bullion Committee set at nought—the labours of Sir James Mackintosh and Sir Samuel Romilly impeded—by which Education was disparaged, and the old Poor Law vindicated—of which corruption is the fruit, and selfishness the mainspring; and on which the term of Toryism has been conventionally fixed. Permit me to observe, my Lord, that this principle was irrevocably disavowed by Lord Stanley, when he participated in the great change by which the ruling power was transferred from the higher to the middle classes of the country; and no less pointedly or irreversibly repudiated by his followers, when they determined that hereafter the Conservatives of England should be ranged under the banners of a firm, of an eager and illustrious Reformer.

Perhaps, it may be said, however, by those who love to wander from a point at issue into some wider field of declamation and inquiry, “We object to Free Trade principles; and we object to this Bill because some have chosen to defend it as an application of them.” My Lord, as it is your lot to be familiarly conversant with the science of political economy, although belonging to a party by which it is seldom treated with respect, I need hardly point to the extraordinary error involved in this attack. Your Lordship well knows that, in the abstract, it is not possible to urge objections against Free Trade which do not drive with equal vehemence and point against

Foreign Commerce. . Your Lordship well knows that, inasmuch as the action of the latter is to economize productive power throughout the habitable globe<sup>1</sup>, and as the simple function of the former is still farther to economize it; whoever hardily proclaims in universals that he is hostile to Free Trade, means neither more nor less than that all foreign commerce is distasteful to him—that English wines should be preferred to Portuguese and French—that North America should manufacture for itself—that mercantile marines should cease among the countries of the earth; and, in spite of its antiquity, the whole system of exports and imports receive a summary extinction. Your Lordship would not wish it to be proved that although, in the views of all (except some inexorable theorists, or very simple-minded Englishmen), it is competent in some peculiar circumstances to prove a case for interfering with the unimpeded interchange of various productions among the nations which produce them, such a case must be considered as exceptional; and that whether the existing Navigation Laws are a wise and necessary, or a perilous and indefensible, restriction, depends on the precise effects which are calculated to arise from them, and not on the solution which the sceptics of the nineteenth century may give to a question so long decided by the concurrent practice of mankind, as to whether foreign commerce is a cause of national prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> See J. S. Mills's Political Economy.

Inasmuch, therefore, as each exception to the ancient and acknowledged principle of foreign commerce<sup>1</sup> or free trade must be defended on its own peculiar basis, it follows, that the bad consequences which have been imputed to the abrogation of the Corn Laws, even if allowed, have no bearing on the present question. If free trade in corn has been disastrous, is there any adequate consideration for keeping our foreign policy in a state of weakness and perplexity? If free trade in corn has been disastrous, is there any fair and reasonable object in alienating the affections, in crippling the energies, in neglecting the advantages, and blackening the prospects of our colonial empire? If free trade in corn has been disastrous, is there any proper answer to the inquiry on what intelligible principle the returns of capital should be kept by enhanced freights, restricted enterprise, discouraged manufactures, and annihilated trade, in a state of unnatural and perilous depression? Would it not be as rational to urge, that, because the Reform Bill has not been productive of all the good that has been expected of it, the old Poor Law ought to be revived, and a desolating pauperism spread over the country? Would it not be as rational to urge, that, because the new Post-office arrangement has disappointed the Exchequer, the nuisances of Smithfield ought to be upheld? Would it not be as rational to

<sup>1</sup> The most flagrant and illogical of the exceptions ever claimed must, of course, be considered the well-known mercantile theory; viz., that exports were good, but that imports ought to be discouraged.



urge, that, because the measures to repress the slave trade have rather tended to increase it, no efforts should be made to diminish domestic crime, or encroach upon domestic poverty? It surely cannot be contended, that because the Corn Laws and the Navigation Laws possessed a common feature, the feature of monopoly, with a different history, with a different object, and with different consequences, a result which is alleged to weaken the case against the one, is calculated to destroy the arguments against the other.

My Lord, as the alleged failure of free trade in corn can afford no rational excuse for not considering the measure of Mr. Labouchere upon its own merits, I will venture to allude to two considerations which appear to me to place the necessity for its adoption by the House of Lords in so overpowering a light, that, from my inmost heart, I wish it had fallen to another pen than mine to attempt an adequate or proper statement of them.

It cannot be denied that the House of Lords gave their sanction to the Corn Bill in spite of objections which, however weak, were infinitely stronger than any which could be urged against Mr. Labouchere's measure. I will only mention one of them. It was then open to contend, that a plausible alternative existed to the measure of Sir Robert Peel in a low fixed duty, recommended as it was by the body of political economists. It is not open to contend now that any mode of solving the difficulties which arise from our present Navigation

Law, except that advanced by Mr. Labouchere, can be adopted. It cannot be denied that the emergency alleged to justify the abrogation of the Corn Laws, viz., the prospect of an Irish famine, however serious and well authenticated, was not at all more serious and incapable, from its very nature, of being so well authenticated as the emergency which the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the Board of Trade have brought before the Legislature and the public. If the means of meeting that emergency should be positively refused, while the means of meeting the anterior emergency were readily conceded, who will be able to avoid the painful inference that the monopoly in corn fell before the interested clamours of the Anti-Corn Law League, and not before the free determination of the British aristocracy?

Last Session the House of Lords refused to give its sanction to the measure for dispensing with the usual declaration imposed on members of the House of Commons for the purpose of admitting a single Jew to Parliament. On a question of this sort, involving abstract and religious considerations, it is felt by thinking men that the decision of the House of Lords has considerably more authority than the decision of the House of Commons. When once it is established that on factious grounds or with a view to party combinations the House of Lords is capable of rejecting a measure which three departments of the State have called for, which the intentions of Foreign Powers, the state of our de-

pendencies, and the condition of our trade have rendered necessary, which, conversant mainly with details congenial to its habits and not beyond its comprehension, the House of Commons has matured with care and sanctioned with deliberation, will any one be able to refer to the authority of the Upper House in vindication of the views by which he is compelled to oppose the Jewish measure? Does any one imagine, that if the House of Lords reject the Navigation Bill, they will any longer be enabled to reject the Jew Bill, or that their power of resisting crude, arrogant, and ill-supported<sup>1</sup> theories could survive their disposition, if it ever showed itself, to set at nought the practical conclusions of administrative talent, or the pressing exigencies of public Boards? My Lord, the truth of these two considerations to such a mind as yours, will be the more apparent in proportion as little pains is taken to enforce or to embellish it.

My Lord, in looking over these lines, I find that they contain some harshness of tone, and much inaccuracy of expression, which nothing but the positive necessity of avoiding delay at such a moment as the present could prevent me from eliminating, with as much care as I was able. I submit them to your indulgence, in the firm conviction that they

<sup>1</sup> From any charge of this nature the writer is bound of course, by opinions recently expressed, to exclude the theory on which Mr. Gladstone has defended the Jewish measure.

advance no position which is false in favour of the great measure of which the fate is pending.

Deficient as they are as a full defence of that measure, I rejoice in the prospect that it will not suffer in the end from the want of ample vindication. There is little doubt that the commercial argument will receive from its official sponsor whatever illustration it may yet require: there is little doubt that the full force of the colonial argument will at length be understood and recognized when Lord Grey himself rises, for the purposes of advancing and displaying it: there is little doubt that in the House of Lords the impolicy of any effort to maintain our present Navigation Laws, as regards their European influence and consequences, will be judiciously explained, and amply inculcated. To expect that any speech should be delivered embracing all the parts of this wide and chequered subject, giving to each its proper force, to each its due proportion; proving how inexhaustible details may be compressed by dexterous arrangement, and uninteresting facts illuminated by perspicuous statement; placing in its proper light the whole extent of a three-fold administrative evil; and exhibiting at full length the stature of a large and variously calculated remedy might be a rash and idle anticipation, if it was not recollected that for nearly fifty years the subject of the Navigation Laws has been familiar to the mind of a distinguished person who frequently enlivens your discussions, but who does not often find

an opportunity of showing, in, a single night, that he has not yet lost his power of grasping complicated evidence; that he is more than ever eager in his attention to the vicissitudes and sentiments of Europe; that he has not renounced his friendship for the North American dependencies; that the cause of our commercial interests is still congenial to his feelings; that the selfish declamations of a class can neither overcome his patriotic bias, or impose upon his vigorous intelligence; and that whatever may be thought by some of his political consistency or dignity, he has fairly and correctly claimed to be accepted as the critic of Demosthenes, and the rival of George Canning.

I remain, my dear Lord,

\* \* \* \* \*

W. F. CAMPBELL.

Brompton, Thursday, May 3rd, 1849.

## POSTSCRIPT.

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ALTHOUGH the opportunity above alluded to has been painfully and unexpectedly abandoned, it should be allowed, at least, in defence of Lord Brougham, that the task shadowed out in the concluding lines of this letter was appropriated by his predecessor<sup>1</sup> in debate, and not left to his performance. Whatever compliment may seem to be involved in the anticipation of the brilliant part which he has so conspicuously avoided, the writer would be bound, of course, to retract, in an emphatic manner, if the third reading of the bill, and the season of reflection which precedes it, did not still leave it open to the various and versatile ability of this unequalled rhetorician.

Having in these pages ventured to allude to the name of Lord Stanley (not, he trusts, disrespectfully), and having last night heard his powerful and touching, but to him unconvincing eloquence, the writer is compelled by his feelings to add, that the satisfaction he derives from the certain triumph of the measure, is wounded and diminished by the circumstance, that so much genius should deplore, and so much public spirit be alarmed by it.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lansdowne.

Wednesday, May 9th.